10: d'Orleans--265-266 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 531, 712

[LSS: at Muong Ngoi] "On the summit of a hillock that overlooks the valley stands a polygonal embankment formed of red [266] earth in which some openings have been made, a wall in the centre surrounds a block of masonry seven or eight yards in diameter which supports a dome of white plaster, with gilt ornaments. Above it, there is a cone made of seven gilded circles, surmounted by a point, the whole edifice may be about fifteen feet high, and I remark some small reliquaries containing rough statuettes, of which the faces are half obliterated. The natives, whom I question, tell me that it is a fort, and in truth, a few cannons in that position, could easily command both sides of the valley, but at present they are missing. However, in my opinion, the monument is of religious origin; it reminds me of similar edifices in Thibet; but I cannot obtain any information either upon the date or the object of its construction."

10: d'Orleans--289 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 361

"Here is Luang Prabang: at the first glance from the boat we can see nothing, or at least very little that indicates a city. For some hundreds of yards there are Laotian buildings on the left bank of the river, but their roofs are scarcely seen through vistas amongst the palm trees, cocoa trees, and bamboos, but the verdure gradually diminishes as the houses become more crowded and are arranged in more compact lines. We realise that it is an important city, an earthen mound dominates the whole, surmounted by one of those gilded domes, which recall the cupolas of the Russian churches. In the confusion of yellowish dwellings the pagodas are recognised by their superior height and by their roofs which are covered with brown tiles, laid one above the other and raised in Chinese cornices at the extremities, the palace has almost the air of an European building."

10: d'Orleans--325 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 316, 346, 532, 821

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "When we land on the left bank, we notice a number of people stooping down, with their feet in the water, engaged in washing out the sand; these are gold finders, who earn but a scanty living, though they sometimes come upon an old coin or two which has been washed down stream. A climb of about fifty feet up decrepit steps, which in summer are under water, brings us to the town. Close upon the left is a small pagoda, Ouate Poune Sai, which is only remarkable for the fresco above the entrance gate, this representing Kop, the sun, eating the moon; in other words, the fresco is intended to designate an eclipse."

10: d'Orleans--330-331 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 532, 778

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "The market occupies the principal artery of the town, with numerous pagodas and palaces to the right and left, one of those on the left being Ouate Mal', ouate being the word used in Laotian, Siamese, and Burmese, to signify temple, while mal' means new. The pagoda itself from 100 to 130 feet long by fifty to seventy feet broad, with whitewashed walls and a tile roof. The interior is very similar to that of a Catholic church, with pictures on the walls representing religious legends, and at the end an altar, upon which are accumulated ornaments of all kinds and statues of gods in every variety of pose, while in the centre, as in all the other temples, is a golden figure of Buddha seated, from seven to ten feet high. The features are the same in all these statues of Buddha, and, with his legs crossed, and his hands resting upon his thigh the statue which is more the outcome of high strung religious feelings, and represents the very spirit of the races which have [331] succeeded one another upon this soil for so many centuries, than the work of any great artist, seems to have concentrated in it attitude, its countenance, and its gaze, the essence of the moral beliefs, the object of existence, and the reason of death, as they were conceived by one-half of the old world."

10: d'Orleans--332 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 735, 788

"The temples are public, and they who have no family home are entitled to sleep in them, while upon week days the people come to make offerings of flowers, and perform libations with water, listening to the advice given them by the priests, while the women tell their beads, and signify that they have got through them by blowing through a sea shell."

10: d'Orleans--332 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 524, 778, 793

"Outside the principal building, in the courtyard of the pagoda, [LSS: the pagoda of Ouate Maï in Luang Prabang] are a series of ongmong, or small buildings which contain the statues of the gods; pyramids (Tâte) containing the bones of prominent bonzes or members of the Royal Family, and plaster bells like the lotus flower, behind all these buildings, hidden among the trees, being the houses of the bonzes, whose pupils we remark at play, the game at which they play, with a hollow ball made out of bamboo canes twisted together, being one which requires great skill."

10: d'Orleans--332 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 202, 346, 731, 793

"After leaving Ouate Maï, we ascend the small hill which commands a fine view of the town, about 350 feet above, and upon the summit of which are several small buildings and a gilt belfry in which is hung a tam tam about three feet in length. Several men keep guard over it and beat it to let the bonzes know when it is the hour for study, or else an alarm bell in case of fire. There is a grand view from here, as the city is at our feet, half hidden among the cocoa trees, one part, which was burnt last year and has been rebuilt, being less wooded than the others."

10: d'Orleans--332-333 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 776, 826

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "We collect some bivalve fossils as we come down, half-way from the summit, being a covered terrace with a building, inside which is a bath-shaped cavity with five marks supposed to have been made [333] by the foot of Buddha when he traversed the Mekong. This is why it is called Pra bate (1) (foot of God).

1. Bate is the word used for the feet of deities or kings; tine for those of ordinary mortals."

10: d'Orleans--333-334 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 532, 177.53

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "Among the other pagodas are Ouate Tiomsi, which contains nothing remarkable, and Ouate Pahope, with a good deal of wood carving and frescoes representing animals and scenes in the life of Buddha, to say nothing of pictures of Frenchwomen in the dress of the First Empire, which may possibly have been brought here by the traveller Monhot some forty years ago. Beyond these are Ouate Paphay and Ouate Pakay, both of which are very graceful and have beautifully carved facades. The whole effect reminds me in a remote measure of the Hindoo architecture, and among the figures on the wood-carving of the doors is [334] one of Nangmanouba, a woman standing up on a dragon, and another of a personage wearing a costume very similar to that which was in vogue with us during the middle ages."

10: d'Orleans--338-339 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 777

[LSS: in Luang Prabang] "There are several other pagodas at the far end of the town to be visited, including that of Ouate Sieng Tong, in which we notice a large banner on which are depicted a series of circles representing the march of Buddha. True believers can see upon these banners the footprints of the god, and these figures reproduced upon the coats of the soldiers are regarded as a talisman.

Among the accessory monuments in the courtyard is a small pyramid partly covered with blades of silver or copper and bearing a Laotian inscription, which, as the interpreter tells me, informs passers-by [339] that the bones of a mandarin named Tianone are laid to rest inside it, and the edifice is surrounded by pillars, surmounted by lotus flowers and looking very much like large asparagus."

10: d'Orleans--339-340 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346, 361, 532, 778

"Part of the town is very sparsely inhabited, a few ruins on the track indicating the site [340] of the ancient ramparts, while turning back in the direction of the river, we have on our left the grounds of several houses belonging to mandarins, and on the right, at the foot of the hill, a group of pagodas well worth a visit.

The most important of these is Ouate Uisoune, so named after the king who built it. Dating, as the Siamese Colonel tells us, from the fourteenth century, it is in a very decrepit state, but there is much in it worth seeing; notably the gates which are of carved wood and gilt. To the right in Pra Noriei, the fourarmed goddess, borne up by Kroute, the god of the birds, and in the centre are two women, one of whom is being carried by five elephants, while to the left a god standing erect upon a buffalo is supposed to represent the chief of the coolies who weed the courtyards of the pagodas. In the interior are a number of wooden columns covered with gilded designs and others of masonry, together with pictures representing the history of Pra Uetsandaha and of Guadama. Upon the altar is a large gilt statue called Pratiao Ong Luong (great god)."

10: d'Orleans--341 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346

OUATE UISOUNE (PAGODA), LUANG PRABANG.

10: d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-1-2
116, 173, 346, 777, 782

"Behind the altar [LSS: of the pagoda of Ouate Uisoune in Luang Prabang] is a semi-circular black stone upon a wooden pedestal and covered with Laotian inscriptions. Upon one side of this stone, it is related how the king of Muong Hay (near Muong Yan), having come for a festival with the king of Luang Prabang, left in the pagoda images of Buddha and books made of palm branches about 1198. The date is 1198 after Tiaoman Ta, who is supposed to have lived sixty-six centuries ago, so that it is one difficult to verify. Upon the reverse is a cabalistic sign which, worn by a soldier on the [pages 341 and 342 contain illustration] [343] breast, renders him invulnerable. This sign is as follows:-

10: d'Orleans--340-343 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos-2
116, 173, 346, 777, 782

The figures are in Laotian.
Ruk is an invocation to the gods.
Poutin erexa means (Pra god) pout, protect me.
Tom (in) erexa means (Teonda god) protect me.
Sonkin erexa means, bonzes protect me.
In this, as in the other temples are to be found the conduit for the holy water, the pulpit, the sunshades, the divinities which lay hands on the faithful, the adorned gods and the Buddhas with clasped hands (Pra Hopokoute), while in the adjoining pagoda of more recent construction are twenty rows of small gilt Buddhas placed close beside one another against the wall."

10: d'Orleans--343-344 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 346

"In going back to the market street, [LSS: in Luang Prabang] we pass the residence of the Siamese Colonel, the barracks and the house being built for the members of the English survey party.

Following the main street eastward, we at last reach the important temple of Tate Loung (literally, [344] grand monument), which is situated upon a grassy eminence, the temple being white in colour and having a double roof of light tiles. This building seems bright and trim by comparison with those already visited, but when we come to examine it more closely we find that the medallions of carved wood between the two roofs are of considerable antiquity, while the interior is not so interesting as that of several others. It is here that the king and the people confer the principal religious orders, and this is why it is called the royal pagoda. I may add that there are several small pagodas of less importance upon the right bank."

23: Franck--299-300 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 346, 361, 778

"Luang Prabang means Kingdom of the Divine Buddha. What more natural then than that there should be many Buddhist temples, shrines, and monasteries in its capital? Indeed there are so many on both sides of the river that the town might easily be mistaken for a holy city, devoted to priests and pilgrims. Some of the temple compounds are bare ground scattered with yellow-roofed buildings of Siamese or Burmese character, with big stupas made of mud bricks and more or less overgrown with vegetation, with mere cells raised on piles, in which languid bonzes meditate. Others are covered with groves of trees, shaded by masses of palm and banana leaves; but in them all great calm and quiet reigns. Just behind the main and market street fronting the royal palace is a rocky ridge called Pagoda Hill, two hundred feet above the plain and half encircled by the Nam-khan by which travelers unworthy of Fords come to [300] the capital from the east or south. It is worth climbing if only for the view it offers of the idyllic city and its surrounding semi-jungle; and along it ramble queer old religious structures, including one built over a gigantic 'footprint of Buddha' in the native rock."

23: Franck--348-349 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 346, 361

"Formerly Vientiane had a hundred and twenty magnificent temples, so well built that, in addition to many ruins lost in the bush, some still remain symmetrical and perfect in general form, though their beams have rotted away and the masonry has been exposed to tropical sun and rain for a century. There are some striking doors giving entrance to roofless ruins; within the falling shell of a temple near the Résidence, in which I was lord of all I surveyed because of the absence of the résuper,' two big Buddhas sit in the infinitely [349] patient attitude of the East, though the rains fall and the sun beats down upon their coiled-serpent covered heads, while the vegetation piously strives to clothe and hold them together as the mud and stone of which they are made crumble bit by bit away."

25: Brodrick--104-105 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 346, 696

"Most of the Laotian pagodas are a mass of jumbled ruin. Others are in sore straits. Still, there is an abundance of temples in Luang-Prabang itself. The sixteenth-century That-Luong has been restored, as has the old [105] Royal Pagoda. There is the ruined Vat-Manorom, built it is said, in 1372 to shelter a colossal statue of the Buddha, of which only the bust and head have survived. And there is the Pagoda of the Crystal Statue, which statue was carried off in 1827 by the Siamese to Bangkok. Any criminal who reached the Temple of the Crystal Statue could claim absolute asylum--in the olden days--but now the building is breached. And there are many more, temples and stupas."

25: Brodrick--105-106 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians-1-2
116, 346, 531

"The that, or Laotian stupa, is as imposing in size as the vat, or temple. Sometimes, but rarely, the that is just a dome, like the stupas of Ceylon, then, again, it may be bell-shaped as in Siam and Burma, but the peculiar Laotian form is bulbous and elongated into a sort of spire which, however, shows a peculiar section, ridged at four corners and bulbous between them. This shifting outline lends a pleasingly impermanent air to the pinnacles jutting up above the feathery fronds of the garden-city. So, despite botching in the Siamese taste, and manifest foreign influence, the Luang-Prabang pagodas with those of the Tran-ninh province, have retained much of their archaic character. But although there may be buildings in ancient style there are no very ancient monuments. The oldest still in use cannot date farther back than 1500.

The plan of the viharas, or temples, is similar to that of the Cambodian. The familiar fig-tree spreads its glistening leaves over the sacred enclosure. But the architecture is quite different. Gone are the twisting, twining eaves, the fragile, delicate fretwork of the modern Khmers. Here the temples are rectangular and white-washed-over brick. The roofs are high and deep and drop far down, giving the whole structure a queerly Oceanian or South Seas appearance. Within, the walls are richly frescoed with floral arabesques and geometrical designs on a red background. The doors and shutters are adorned with presentments of giants, garudas, polycephalous serpents and the phantasies of Indian legend. A rich, and often lavish, display of

enamelled lead-work, gilded stucco and panelling inlaid with chips of looking-glass, does not detract from a general appearance of elegance and strangeness, due not a little to the curious Laotian convention of battened openings. Windows and doors all have sides converging from base to top and even the pillars and columns taper. Here must be some lasting tradition of wooden-hut architecture still preserved intact by more primitive peoples of Indo-China and Indonesia.

It seems that in the olden days, when the Laos lands were rich [106] in gold, the temples were sheathed in gold sheets so that the sanctuaries seemed precious reliquaries.

And, within, at the far end, in the half-gloom you will see a great image of the Buddha, often of lacquered and gilded brick, an image quite different from the representations of the Blessed One in any land or at any time for the last two thousand years. The narrow long face, the jutting aquiline nose, reminding you sometimes of the curves you see on masks from the Sepik region of New Guinea, the daemonic expression, the short head (the Laotians themselves are predominantly short-headed), the visage all features and expression and almost no face. You are a long way from any other interpretation of the Hellenistic inspired Buddha image. Here, in the Laos, you have a South Seas Buddha, a Buddha assured indeed but active and not contemplative."

25: Brodrick--109 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 346, 527, 641

"The Moon City [HD: i.e. Vientane] was once a town of sanctuaries and held, they say, over eighty pagodas, but there are now only twenty-four, most of which are in ruins. The place was thoroughly sacked by the Siamese in 1827. The Sisaket pagoda has been more or less restored, and here take place twice a year the ceremonies of the Great and of the Little Oath, [HD: of allegiance] this time to the prevailing government in France and not to the Lord of the Elephants and the Umbrella. [HD: i.e. the king of Luang Prabang]"

25: Brodrick--109 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 177, 346, 532

"The Phra-Keo Pagoda or Temple of the Emerald Buddha, [HD: in Vientane] is, by tradition, supposed to have been founded in A.D. 814, but it was razed by the Siamese and the Emerald Buddha was carried off to Bangkok where it may still be admired in its gorgeous temple. Needless to say, the Emerald Buddha is not carved out of emerald. It is fashioned in green jasper and is undoubtedly of Laotian workmanship, for the image, as you can behold it in the Siamese capital, has a most Laotian face, vehement, cunning and, it may be, lecherous.

The sight of Vientiane to-day is the That-Luong. This large stupa is some mile and a half outside the city and is set in a palm grove. The buildings seem to date from about 1567 and were put up to shelter a relic of the Buddha. The sanctuary was spared by the Siamese. However, in 1874, the Chinese Yünnan land-pirates, who feared neither God nor man, plundered and ravaged the shrine. It was botched up unskilfully, but a few years ago, was restored to its pristine appearance through the efforts of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient. The stupa not only shows the curious bulbous spire we noted at Luang-Prabang, but the whole place is uncommonly complicated in plan. It is surrounded by a cloister in the Siamese mode and the stupa itself rises from a series of rectangular terraces set round with numerous pinnacles joined together by an arcade."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
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A DRAGON APPARENT

started cellular constructions in the window shutters and armies of cockroaches marched across the floors. Precious, expensive water was brought in large pots and left in the subdivision of the room where, using a gourd with a hole in its bottom, you could take a shower. The main advantage of having this open pot of water in the room was that it collected a gauzy layer of mosquitoes which were content to stay there in harmless concentration, unless disturbed. The Mekong could be seen from the window, a sallow strip of water across half a mile of whitened river-bed. Perhaps this drought had something to do with the town's electrical generating system, because only occasionally – and never at night – would the filament of the electric light bulb consent to glow feebly. Whenever the hot wind sprang up, stirring the trees round the house, great dry leaves as big as dishes came tumbling down and fell with a crash in the layer already deposited on the earth. It was the death-rattle of the year, which in Laos expires in croaking senility, to be re-born with the raging storms which were about to break.

Vientiane is a religious centre, one of the two ancient capitals of Laos. It abounds with pagodas, many of them deserted and in ruins; and colossal Buddhas, with dusty half-obliterated smiles, sit in the tumbled brickwork.

Since at this time, when the earth had dried up, there was no work to be done anywhere, it was the season of *bouns*; the Laotian festivals. Each pagoda holds one, as a means of collecting funds. They last for three days, and although an attempt is made not to hold two *bouns* at the same time, there are so many pagodas that duplication cannot always be helped; so that every night for several weeks the sky over one or more districts of Vientiane glows with the reflection of thousands of lights, while from a distance one catches the gusty, carnival sounds of Laotian rejoicings. *Bouns* start at about eleven, and go on all night.

The first night after my arrival I went to a *boun*, which I found by

[late March. — Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
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acknowledge in the street a lady with whom one happens to be on particularly good terms. These things in Laos are fraught with an etiquette which is the legacy of a highly organized society not too far gone in decay.

The charm of Vientiane lies in the life and the customs of the people. Unless one is an amateur of pagoda architecture there is little else to be seen. The Laotians have preferred to work in wood, rather than stone, and their art, confined chiefly to the decoration by religious artists of the doors, pillars and interiors of pagodas, quickly perishes in such a climate.

Outside the town there is a great, grey, half-decayed *stupa*, built as a tomb for a hair of the Buddha. It is surrounded by a cloister, containing perhaps a thousand Buddha images; a collection of which the people of Vientiane are very proud. But even here, where the religion is practised in its purest form, there is a little degeneration, a little backsliding from the lofty philosophic conception; and the taint of magic practices shows itself. Selecting one of the numerous images as a personal tutelary divinity, the devotee subjects it to a kind of bribery similar to that sometimes practised in Southern Europe with images of the saints. In this case the image's chief function is healing, and when the sufferer recovers from any complaint he hastens to the pagoda to apply gold-leaf to the part of the Buddha corresponding to that where he has felt the pain in his own body. I was interested to deduce from this practice that the people of Vientiane are much plagued by headaches – perhaps those which accompany malaria.

Standing in a corner of the sanctuary was an ancient ithyphallic statue, an old Hindu divinity, no doubt, which had been worn smooth in the appropriate parts by the feminine adoration of a thousand years. I was told that the women of the French colony who wish for a child frequently emulate their husbands' pose of Laos-ization by coming here secretly to pay their respects. I wondered whether this clandestine tribute might not be extended

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
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361 fluence with the river of a tributary; a small, somnolent and sanctified Manhattan Island. A main street has turnings down to the river
346 358 on each side and a pagoda at every few yards, with a glittering roof and doors and pillars carved with a close pattern of gilded and painted designs. There is an infallible sense of colour, a blending of old gold and turquoise and of many greys; but the bonzes are continually at work, painting and carving and refurbishing, so that everything is just a little too new (an extraordinary complaint in Laos), too spruce, too odorous of freshly applied varnish. The roof finials glisten with new applied glass and china mosaic. The ancient, blunted features of lions and dragons get regular scrubbings, have their teeth painted dead white and are re-fitted, as required, with new eyes of green glass. A year or two's neglect might greatly improve Luang Prabang.

000 For all the briskness with which its holy places are maintained, the silence in Luang Prabang is only disturbed by the distant, classroom sounds of bonzes chanting in Pali, and the slow, mild booming of gongs. It is the home-town of the siesta and the Ultima Thule of all French escapists in the Far East. Europeans who come here to live soon acquire a certain, recognizable manner. They develop quiet voices, and gentle, rapt expressions. This is accompanied by the determined insouciance of the New Year's reveller. It is an attitude which is looked for and is put on like a false nose or a carnival hat. Laos-ized Frenchmen are like the results of successful lobotomy operations – untroubled and mildly libidinous. They salt their conversation with Laotian phrases, all of which express a harmoniously negative outlook. *Bo pen nhang*, which is continually to be heard, means no more than, 'It doesn't matter'. But said in Laotian it takes on the emphasis of a declaration of faith. Single men instantly take to themselves Laotian wives, completing their bride's happiness with the present of a superb bicycle, covered with mascots and pennants, and with chaplets of artificial flowers round the hub-caps, instead of the leather, dust-removing strap one sees in Europe. Several painters have retired here to escape the world,

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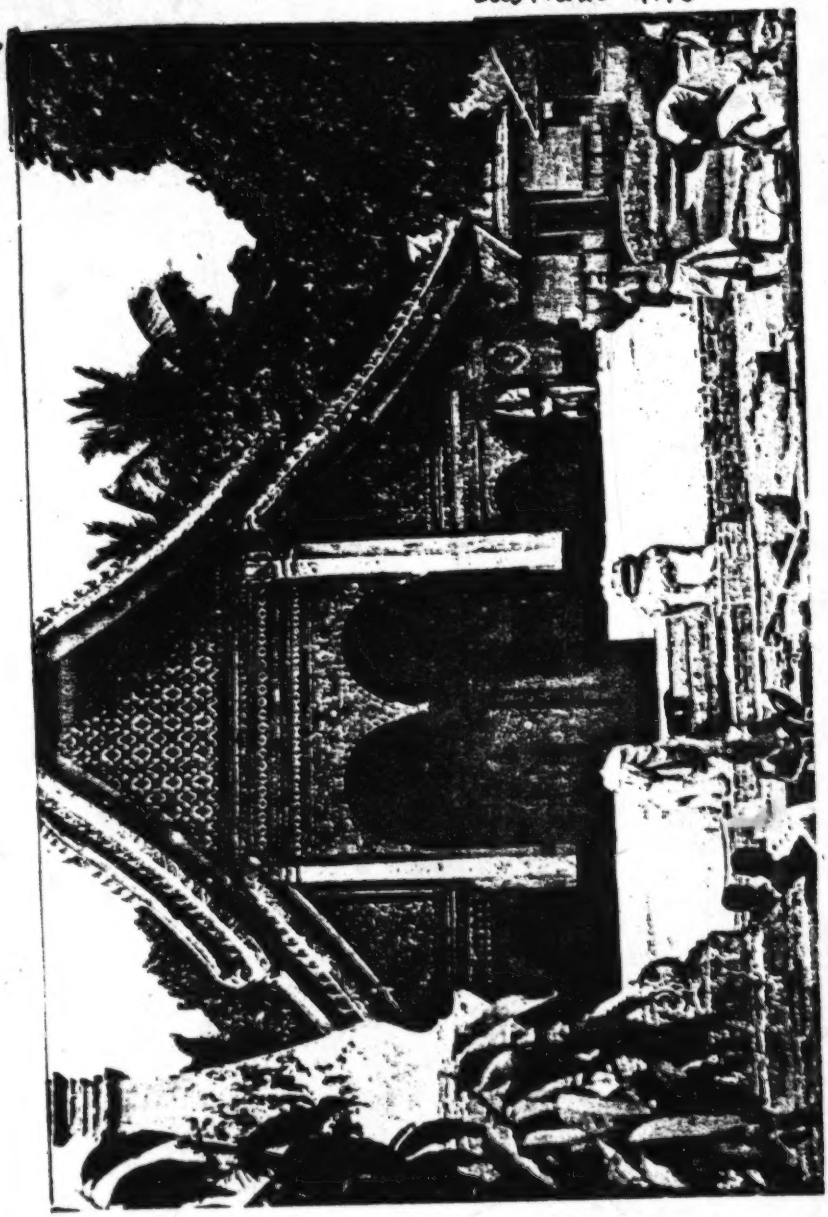

Pagoda at Luang Prabang

[facing p. 288]

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A DRAGON APPARENT

000 But it was beginning to seem to me that, even allowing for the heat, something must be wrong. A hill rises sharply in the middle of the town, topped by a glittering pagoda. The climb up to this, long put off, was so thoroughly exhausting that it used up the day's
● 346 supply of energy. The pagoda when I finally got there was very small and contained a collection of mouldering wooden Buddhas. The re-decorating bonzes had not been able to bring themselves to climb up here, so that most of the paintwork and gilding had weathered away, to the carvings' great advantage. But there seemed to have been a recent clear-out, perhaps in preparation for a re-furbishing to come. The images that were too far gone in decay had been stuffed into niches of the surrounding rocks, one of which bore a bright yellow poster which I supposed at first to have some religious significance, but which proved to be an advertisement for the Victory Brand Glorious Firecracker Company, and showed a Chinese nationalist soldier giving the V sign. The attraction of the pagoda lay in its doors, deeply carved with a graceful, swirling design of foliage, dancers and elephants. In either direction one looked out upon a very Chinese scene of mountains and rivers barely sketched in mist. It was viewed through the bare scrawny branches of frangipani trees planted round the pagoda, and at a lower level the slopes were clouded with the flowering trees bearing the blossoms which are called locally golden flowers of Burma.

000 After the descent from the pagoda I actually felt the need of a pre-lunch nap, and slightly alarmed I asked a French acquaintance's advice. Characteristically, he recommended me to a Sino-Vietnamese doctor, celebrated, he said, for his almost magical cures. This readiness to put one's faith in exotic medicine is another phase of going native. I have seen it happen before in Central America where people of European origin are quite ready to have themselves treated by Indian *shimans*, excusing themselves with a 'you never know; there may be something in it, after all'. In this case I had formed the private theory that amoebic dysentery might be the trouble, which, while it exhausts the vitality, does not always pro-

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Figure 1: /Frontispiece/. Temple of Sisaket at Vientiane.

order to prove that they had arrived first they pointed to a rattan basket which was placed at the top of a tree and intertwined with the highest branches. That evening the Thaïs chose a higher tree and placed their oldest basket at the top of it. The following morning they showed it to the Khas, whose simple minds were convinced by the subterfuge and who yielded the spot." 175* 563

4. The establishment of the Thaï dynasty of Khoun, which at first preserved close ties with Cambodia and perhaps also with China following the Mongol invasions, and whose 23rd representative, Phaya-Kham-Phong, reigned in 1316.

The chronological list, as complete as possible, of the chieftains who ruled over the region before this latter date may be drawn up in the following manner: 175* 643*

/39/ 1. Phaya-Nan-Tha (from Ceylon?).

2. Phaya-Inthapatha (from Cambodia) who is said to have married the above chieftain's widow.

3. Thao-Phou-Tha-Saine, son of the foregoing.

4. Phaya-Ngou-Lueum, son of the foregoing.

5. Thao-Phe-Si, son of the foregoing.

6. Ay-Saleukheuk, son of the foregoing.

7. Ay-Tiet-Hai, son of the foregoing.

8. Thao-Tiantha-Phanit, a simple "betel merchant" who came from Vientiane miraculously covered with gold and magnificent cloth and who struck wonder into the people of Xieng-Dong-Xieng-Thong. When elected king he used his wealth to beautify the city. He built the first pagoda of Xieng-Thong and the "that" on the Phou-Si (1).

1. The group of religious structures which today bears the name of Xieng-Thong is said to date from 1561. (H. Parmentier, Inventaire des monuments du Laos.) With its graceful annexes and its neo-Burmese gate, it is numbered among the greatest successes of Laotian architecture. /346/

9. Khoun-Swa, a Kha chieftain.

10. Khoun-Ngiba, son of the above.

11. Khoun-Viligna, son of the above.

12. Khoun-Kan-Hang, son of the above, under whose reign the Thaï invasion took place.

643* 175* 642 Complaints against such tyranny, which had heretofore been unknown in the region of Lan-Xang, reached his father-in-law the king of Cambodia. The latter summoned his son-in-law to Angkor and in the name of the Buddhist precepts advised him to use /47/ moderation and "pity towards the weak" (1). Fa-Ngoun seemed to accept the

1. According to Auguste Pavie's translators, Fa-Ngoun was content merely to send an embassy to Angkor at the request of Queen Nang-Kéo.

lesson, was baptized in accordance with the rites of the Hinayana and himself urged that a Cambodian mission composed of clergymen, scholars and artisans be sent to Muong-Swa. Pha-Maha-Pasaman-Théla-Tiao, the head of the mission, brought the sacred books of orthodox Buddhism and a statue of Buddha which had been given to the Kmer sovereign by the king of Ceylon in the ninth century. This statue was the Prabang, which became the palladium of the kingdom of Lan-Xang (2).

2. When the mission passed through Vientiane the governor Phao is supposed to have requested and obtained the right to keep the statue in the city for three years. Many legends recount the voyage of the Prabang in diverse manners and disagree as to the route followed. Here again it may be a question of the Vien-Kham in Tran-Ninh.

346 175* 643* 103 The Prabang. When they reached their destination the Kmer workers began the construction of a temple, the Vat-Gnot-Kèo, where the Prabang was solemnly placed in 1358. But it was not until two centuries later, when the seat of the capital was transferred to Vientiane by the king Setthathirat (1563), that the name of Luang-Prabang was given to the city.

643* 175* 631 /48/ When he returned to his States Fa-Ngoun proclaimed himself Supreme Chief of religion and resumed, with a severe hand although never exceeding the bounds of firmness, the administration of the various territories which then made up the kingdom of Lan-Xang. These were, namely, Muong-Swa in the strict sense; Xieng-Khong in the north (present region of Houei-Sai); Vientiane, Hoi-Luang and Xieng-La (on the Mékong downstream from Vientiane), Muong-Kabang (Bassac) in the south; Kham-Keut (now the province of Cammon) and Muong-Van (Savannakhet) in the east.

645 who should be in the dynastic tradition. After a long deliberation
175* which was made laborious by the fact that Lane-Kham-Dèng's children
643* were minors, it offered the crown to Thao-Lu-Sai, the governor of Muong-Sai-Muoi and last legitimate son of Sam-Sène-Thaï. Thao-Lu-Sai accepted and mounted the throne under the name of Phaya-Sai-Tiakaphat.

643* Twenty-three years old, he assumed power under difficult condi-
175* tions. The excesses of Nang-Keo-Phimpha had indeed weakened royal authority within the country and aroused the attention of the neighboring princes who, whether tributaries or not, were more or
/668/ less jealous of the power of the king of Lan-Xang. The rich province of Vientiane had always retained an inclination /64/ towards independence, and its governor, Sai-Moni, thought that the moment had come to shake off the yoke, but he was assassinated before he even had time to set out on the march (1). The failure of this movement

/346/ 1. The temple of Wat-Thai is supposed to have been erected in his memory by the inhabitants of Vientiane.

which was crushed "in the egg" doubtless gave cause for reflection to the vassals, who lay quiet and congratulated themselves on their reserve when they realized that Tiakaphat was a wise, steadfast and prudent sovereign who was quite determined to maintain the integrity of his States. He governed peaceably for forty years, intelligently seconded in the last years of his reign by his eldest son Thao-Kone-Kèo, who rapidly acquired an enlightened knowledge of the kingdom's affairs and an unquestioned authority in the Council of Ministers. The king created the unprecedented title of Sene-Muong for him, named him prince of Xieng-Lo and gave him the position of Oupahat.

721 The Annamite Invasion (1478-1479). Meanwhile the Annamites
643* were only waiting for an opportunity to extract vengeance for the
175* affront which Lê-Loi had once suffered and also to consolidate their western frontier which lay open on the Black River. /65/ If they had not done so before it was only because they had been prevented by the incessant incursions of the Chams on their southern frontiers, but in 1471 the king Lê-Thanh-Tôn occupied the land of Qui-Nhon and succeeded in destroying the kingdom of Champa once and for all, and in 1478 he used a futile incident as a pretext for invading Lan-Xang. If we are to believe the legend, Tiakaphat had refused

643* merchandise).
648* His life was also a short one. He died at the age of thirty-three,
175* handing down the crown to an only son born two years after his accession to the throne.

SOM-PHOU (1488-1502), KING 1496-1501.

643* This child, Som-Phou, who gave only his name to his reign, was
175 removed from power by the ministers, for reasons unknown, when he reached the age of thirteen. He then died in the following year.

/71/ VISOUN (1467), KING 1501-1520.

643* His uncle Phé-Sai (1) was summoned to the throne in his place in
175

1. Next to the last son of Tiakaphat.

/821/ 1501. According to the Annals, the sky was streaked with lightning and thundered unceasingly on the coronation day. Struck by this phenomenon, in which they saw a manifestation of divine satisfaction, the Council of Ministers gave him the name of Phaya-Visoun (lightning).
/787/ In 1506 a son was born to him who was named Phothisarath in consequence of a dream which Visoun's mother had a few days before the queen's delivery. "Banyans in flower (Kok-Pho) had appeared to her in which innumerable birds warbled joyfully." When consulted, the priests predicted that the expected child would be a Saint, and in the royal family everyone rejoiced at the thought that the newborn would come into the world under the sign of the sacred tree in whose shade Buddha had attained the triple science and found the secret of the destinies.
346 In order to magnify in anticipation, so to speak, the marvelous
643* events of his reign, King Visoun built many temples around his palace.
175* /72/ The foundations of a pagoda which was erected under his auspices to the memory of a daughter who had died young can still be seen today in Luang-Prabang (1).

1. Another pagoda, "Posot-Luang," which was located on the present site of the ice-house, has completely disappeared. Great celebrations were held there in honor of the birth of Photisarath.

643* PHOTHISARATH (1506), KING 1520-1547.
His son Phothisarath, who succeeded him in 1520, was an extremely

pious king who justified the bonzes' prophecies by his deeds. He 643*
built a magnificent pagoda to the memory of his father, the
Wat-Visoun (2), the materials for which were requisitioned from 346
175*

2. The edifice which bears this name dates from the time of the king Zakarine (1898). The enormous "stupa" next to it, which covered rich treasures which have only recently come to light, is now in the process of being restored.

the vassals of the northern provinces. Legend has it that the raft
carrying the columns provided by the king of Tran-Ninh sank /539/
downstream from Pak-Vet, and the inhabitants of the region still
say today that they can be seen at certain times of the year be-
neath the waters of the Nam-Khane.

Edict against the cult of the "Phis." The king's great piety 771
and his mystical attachment to the /73/ dogmas of orthodix 175*
Buddhism made him intolerant of the Brahmanic practices which 643*
continued to be honored by the peoples of his States. In 1527 he
prohibited the cult of the Genii and decreed that all the temples
erected to the "Phis" should be demolished. A pagoda called
"Sisouvannathevalok" (1) was built on the very site of the sanctuary/778/

1. This pagoda was destroyed by a tornado in 1883. The king at that time, His Majesty Sisavang-Vong, had it rebuilt in 1905 on the original foundations.

of the tutelary Genie of the capital. But it was impossible, even
for the supreme chief of existences, to drive from the heads of
people as fatalistic as his subjects were the innumerable superstitions
which they attached to accidents, to diseases and to the phenomena
of sky, earth and water. Despite the royal ordinances the cult of
the "Phis," together with a belief in sorcerers and witches, per-
sisted and still persists today.

Phothisarath was the first of the kings of Lan-Xang to leave his 663
Xieng-Thong palace and reside at Vientiane for many years. 175*

Thanks to its central location and its comparative nearness to 633
the kingdoms of Ayuthya and Annam, this city had grown ex-
tensively as a consequence of the development of trade. The
Kmers, who had been in full decline /74/ since the ruin of Angkor
by the kings of Ayuthya, no longer had any influence there. The

115:Le Boulanger--53. H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

Fig. 5. The That-Luong at Vientiane.

/ facing p. 80/

633 Lunet de la Jonquiere has deduced that the ramparts of
643* Vientiane were composed of brick walls from four to six
175* meters in height with an earth banquette inside. They in-
172 cluded three sections, the salients of which were provided
/712/ with circular forts about eight meters high. Two gates which were fortified and crowned with spearhead ornaments gave entrance to the second section, one on the east towards the That-Luong, and the other on the west at the exit of the present Luang-Prabang road.

royal palace in the pagoda of which the emerald Buddha (Pra-Keo), the sign of power and command /82/ which he had brought from Xieng-Mai in 1548 (1), was placed.

/778/ 1. The emerald Buddha was in reality cut from a block of green jasper. The Siamese were to capture it in 1778 and take it to Bangkok, of which it became the tutelary divinity and where the sumptuous temple which rises today in the first court of the royal palace was built for it in 1785.

172 Of the eighty some pagodas which Vientiane was to boast, the
633 Wat Pra-Keo was assuredly one of the greatest and most beautiful.
175* "The trees which veil it (today), the lianas which tie it to the columns and spread a mysterious shadow over its ruins make the visitor feel something of what the soul of the ancients felt on the threshold of a sacred wood. Brick openwork forms the enclosure and monumental staircases lead to the parvis. A dragon writhes on the ramps and raises its menacing head in a last coil. The columns of the gallery are graceful, tall, slender and without a base, but end in a capital of long, sharp leaves which fold outwards and look as though they were raised by the weight which they bear..." (2).

2. De Carne, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./

175* The sanctuary was built on a terrace with three levels. The facade
172 opened onto a monumental portico whose three gateways and side
346 windows were richly framed /83/ /Page 83 is devoted to an illustra-
532 tion: "Ruins of the Pra-Keo at Vientiane"--Translator./ /84/ with many-colored sculptures. The whole edifice was entirely gilded on the outside.

115: Le Boulanger--55 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(1300-1700) Laotians AM8

Fig. 6. Ruins of the Pra-Keo at Vientiane.

/Facing p. 82/

The roof, the greater part of which still existed when Pavie went to Vientiane, has since collapsed and the two colossal statues of Buddha which sit on the abandoned altar remain exposed to the elements. Even as it is this grandiose ruin is wonderfully allied to the natural vegetation which holds it in its grasp and one cannot, without some emotion, evoke before it the past splendor of the kingdom of Lan-Xang. 175• 172 346 532

But the capital accomplishment of Setthitharath is the That-Luong, located about two kilometers away from the city. It is doubtless also the masterpiece of this Laotian architecture which has no powers of endurance but which cannot be denied grace and elegance. Miraculously spared by the Siamese at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the That-Luong was overthrown in 1873 by the Yunnanese pirates and partly restored, in rather a clumsy manner, in 1897-1898. /341/

This pyramidal edifice, called the "plume of the world" by its founder, was the "reliquary of the kingdom" and is still a highly frequented center of pilgrimage. A stele commemorating its erection bears /85/ the date 1566, and according to legend the original that was built about the eleventh century on one of Buddha's hairs.

The first enclosure, which has today crumbled away, is almost confused with the large group of ruined temples which surrounds it. It was formed by an open cloister which was colored with frescoes and in which the faithful and the priests assembled. The second enclosure is formed by a ledge along which runs a garland of bulging ornaments. "One would be tempted to call them the petals of a gigantic lotus bloom on the point of opening. Heavy pedestals covered with inscriptions support thirty-four slender pinnacles. Leaning on these pedestals as on buttresses, the mass on which the pyramid is set begins to deploy its curves and the pyramid itself springs from a sheaf of broad leaves, like the stem of a plant. . . . It once sparkled with gold applied on a lead base, shreds of which can still be seen" (1).

1. De Carne, ibid. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./, quoted by Aymonier, Voyage dans le Laos. See below, Laotian Architecture, p. 124.

First Burmese invasion (1563-1565). Solidly entrenched in his new capital, Setthathirath waited to see what the turn of events would be. /86/ He did not have long to wait, for Bureng-Naung 643• 648• 726 175•

545 /177/ and a barb of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions." (L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 191.)

341 346 172 /177/ The other arts: architecture. Carefree artists: this is what the Laotians seem to have been throughout the ages. And this is what explains the extreme fragility of the innumerable monuments with which they adorned their land and which the pitiless tropical vegetation is today strangling for the most part. Under the Kmer influence in the south and the Burmese in /125/ the north they built temples, chapels, pagoda-libraries, and reliquaries in the shape of "lotus blossoms" or pyramids or cones which were without any originality of their own but almost always charming in the grace, prettiness and elegance of their details. The reigning princes, from Fa-Ngoun to Souligna, were all great builders of temples, but if we except three or four edifices in Luang-Prabang, a few pagodas and chapels, the That-Luong in Vientiane and the Vat Sisaket which is only a century old, practically nothing is left of this abundant flowering (1).

1. There can be no question here of the important monastery of Vat-Phou (Bassac), which is really Kmer and belongs in some way to the Angkor group.

Everywhere in Laos one encounters impressive ruins of brick pagodas which were clumsily built but in which the plaster which covered them still frames the openings with many-colored ornaments and exquisite arabesques. For several years the French have tried, albeit somewhat tardily, to save the chief of these mutilated vestiges of an Edenic past from total destruction. Even the Vat Prakeo itself is today, alas! irrevocably destined to final disintegration.

"More fragile still (was) the style of building /126/ in wood which may well have yielded the most beautiful of the country's achievements. One of the most interesting of these exists today only in the memory which was recorded by a drawing of Delaporte at the time of the expedition of Doudart de Lagree... This was a pagoda located in the vicinity of Luang-Prabang... its form was highly individual, and reminds one of a feeding trough or a bread-pan. Delaporte compares it to an Oriental tomb. Rectangular in shape, its walls flared out up to the first roof. The latter was surmounted by a second recessed story which flared out again to support a second richly ornamented roof..."

"The wooden panels which formed the walls, the corbels, and the beams were all carved with great delicacy. This pagoda was as pretty in the fineness of its details as it was elegant in its general lines. 341 346 172

"But nothing is left of it" (1).

1. Cf. G. Maspero, L'Indochine /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, p. 186.

Sculpture. For these sanctuaries, the Laotians made hordes of statues out of stone, brick, and especially bronze, which were wholly or partly covered with gold. Of the latter, which were always molded from wax models, some attained gigantic size. /127/ All of them strike the various attitudes of the Buddhist liturgy. The bodies are sketchily draped and may be seated, standing, walking or lying down, their arms outspread. The faces are surmounted by a sort of tiara and are frozen in a hieratic smile which is not very expressive and seldom varies. 532 175

Painting. As for the fresco paintings which brighten the walls of certain pagodas, they are not of any special interest. Most of them were "primarily the work of Burmese, Cambodians or Chinese of whom the native artists (were only) the pupils" (1). /177/

1. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 342.

The art of the gold and silver smith. On the other hand, the Laotian jewelers and silversmiths knew and still know, with only the most meager of tools, how to work gold and silver admirably--primarily silver--and how to chase and engrave it. Their motifs show an attractive decorative invention, and it is chiefly in this "minor art" which borders on small-scale industry that we find the most original manifestations of old-time Laotian life /128/ -- betel services, vases, cups, sword and dagger hilts; bracelets, necklaces, rings, headpins, earrings, etc. 326

Basketwork and weaving. Finally, "like all the peoples of the Far East, the Laotians are skilled in all kinds of basketwork. A very pretty object which seems to be peculiar to this land is the small basket for women in which the basketwork is covered with 285 531

been the vassal of Annam and used to pay a triennial tribute. The Tayson revolt forced it to submit to the Siamese, who are mistreating the people. Today, seeing the glory and power of Emperor Gia-Long, the prince of Vientiane asks to serve Annam once again and to pay tribute as in the past.' The embassy was received in a solemn audience by Gia-Long, who questioned it at length on the administration of the country, and was sent back, after a month's stay, with magnificent gifts. . . . The ambassadors brought back to the prince of Vientiane a letter from Gia-Long conceived in the following terms: 'Your predecessor Chao-In was my vassal, and my policy with respect to your kingdom has always been marked by gentleness and goodwill. Remain faithful to your duty and show yourself ever humane towards your people, and you will thereby comply with my wishes.' The question of tribute was settled. It was to be paid every three years, and the time of payment set in such a way that the embassy responsible for bringing it might greet the king during the holiday of the Tet." (Cf. Annals of the court of Hue.) 643* 648* 175*

to /161/ detach Luang-Prabang from Bangkok (1). After the Bassac

1. See below, p. 201.

campaign he had sent Chao-Ngo to fortify Oubone. A triple-entrenched camp was built there and recruits trained, supposedly to defend Siam against any attack from inside or outside.

In Vientiane, he governed in the midst of a brilliant court. 369
The city of Setthathirath and Souligna, although fallen from its 175
former splendor, still contained more than ten thousand families and prided itself on its royal /162/ palace (1) and its many pagodas

1. When the Doudart de Lagree mission visited the city in 1867 the mass of its fallen stones stretched from the Prakeo to the ruins -- which were then still imposing -- of the Wat-Kang. (De Carne, op. cit. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'empire chinois. Paris, 1872./) See above, p. 122, the account by Father Marini. /172/

whose gilt glittered above the walls of its fortifications. In 1818 /346/

369 Anou had built the new temple of Sisaket not far from the deconse-
175 crated Prakeo "with the purpose of attracting the grace of Heaven
/346/ to the souls of his parents as well as to those of all his relatives and to all the souls which people Hell and the world" (2). The corner-

2. Cf. inscription on the stele.

stone was laid on "Thursday, the ninth day of the waxing moon of the year Kap-San" (1824), in the midst of a large assembly of the populace.

778 Inauguration of the temple of Sisaket (1824). On this occasion
796 the king made innumerable gifts to the bonzes (clothing, sandals,
346 fans, iron pen points to write on latania leaves, mats, mattresses,
175* copper betel services, rice baskets, vases, metal drinking cups, carafes, goblets, etc.). He gave /163/ pieces of cloth to the poor, and generous bounties to artisans and musicians. The people walked in procession around the royal palace, carrying oriflammes and effigies of animals which were flowered and perfumed with incense. The holiday lasted three days, to the accompaniment of general rejoicing (1).

1. Ibid. /Inscription on the stele./

346 This temple was the only one which the French found still standing when they reached Vientiane. Of the first enclosure there remain two 'thats', which have recently been restored, and an elegant square pavilion-library whose quadruple pinnacled roof is supported by a graceful colonnade. Three other pavilions have disappeared (2).

2. A bath pavilion, one for worship and one for the tom-toms and gongs.

A cloister pierced by a porch on each side surrounds the central sanctuary, the outer gallery of which discloses a gateway and finely worked windows under the triple porch roofs. The inside walls are
/532/ illuminated by frescoes surmounted by many niches in the form of lotus leaves where thousands of statuettes are grouped in pairs. A wooden ceiling is embellished with gilded panels, and on the altar stands a giant Buddha entirely covered with gold leaf.

346

Fig. 10. Square of the temple of Sisaket at Vientiane.

/Facing p. 164/

346

Fig. 14. The peristyle of the Vat-Mai in Luang-Prabang.

/Facing p. 260/

115: Le Boulanger--194 H-4 (no date) 1931 AM1 Indochina
(20th Cent.) Laotians AM8

Fig. 17. The pagoda of Kieng Thong in Luang-Prabang.

/Facing p. 321/

● 346

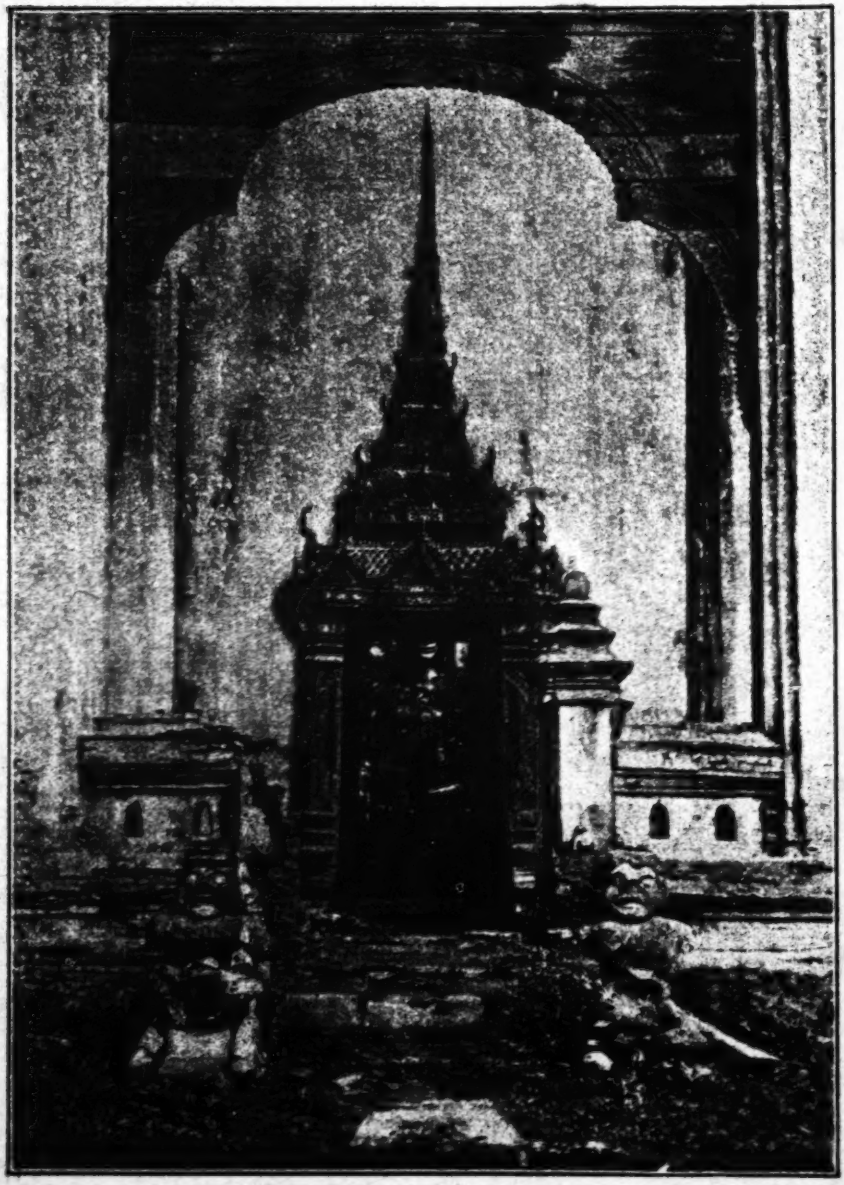
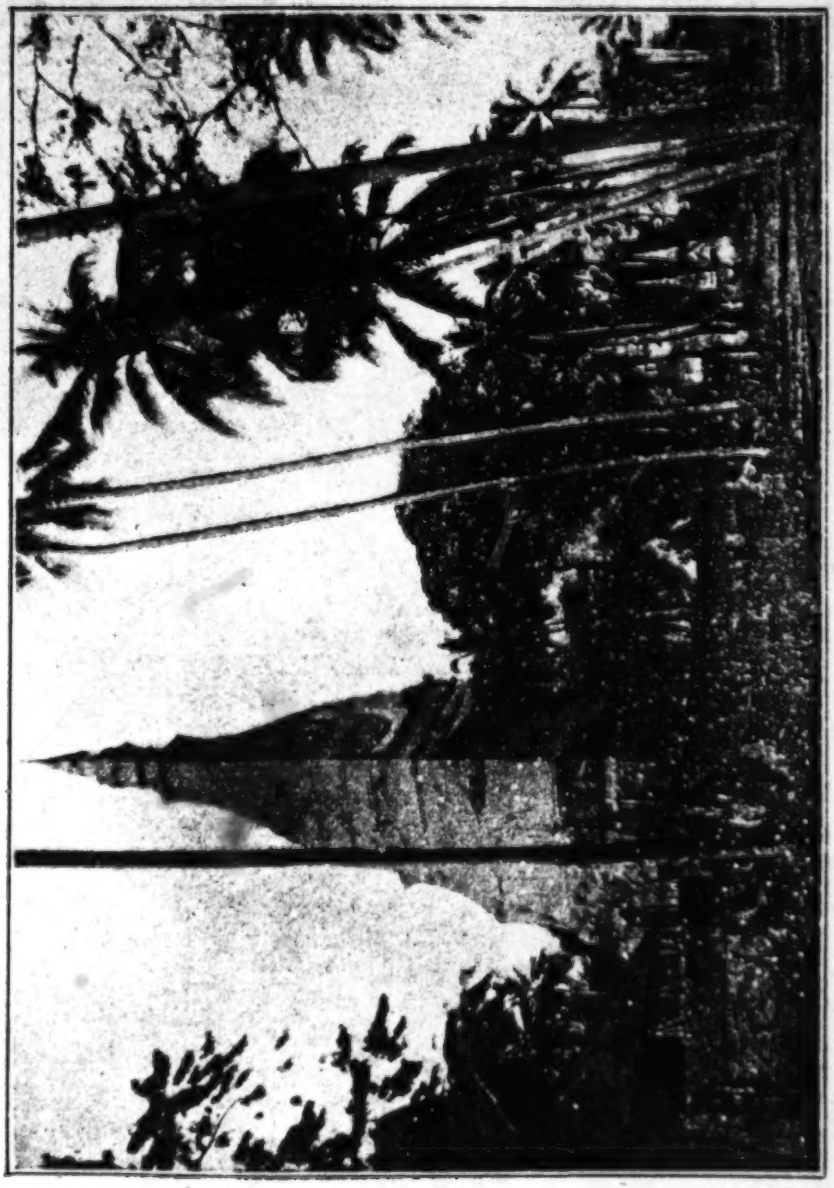


Fig. 3 [p. 5] Entrance to a pagoda in Vien-Tiane.
(Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149; Reinach--64a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

346



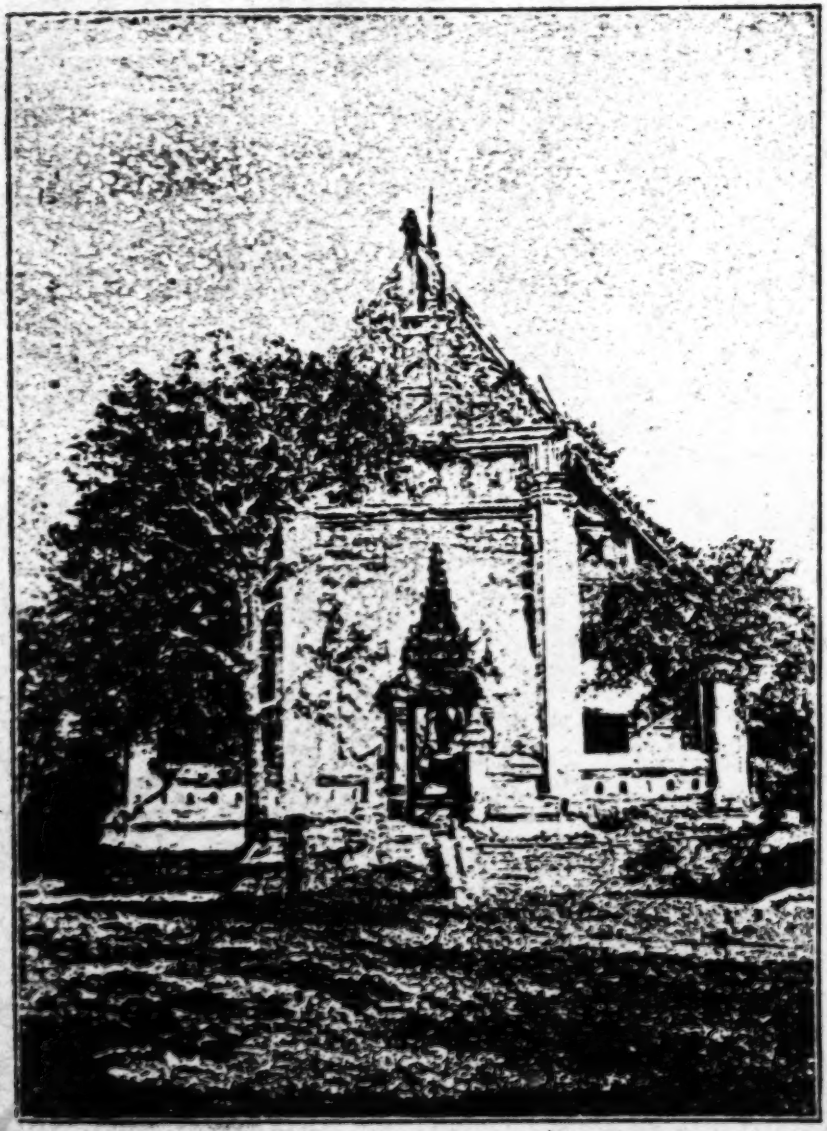


Fig. 35 /p. 129/ Ruins of a pagoda in Vien-Tiane.
(Courtesy of M. Blanchet.)

149: Reinach--109a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

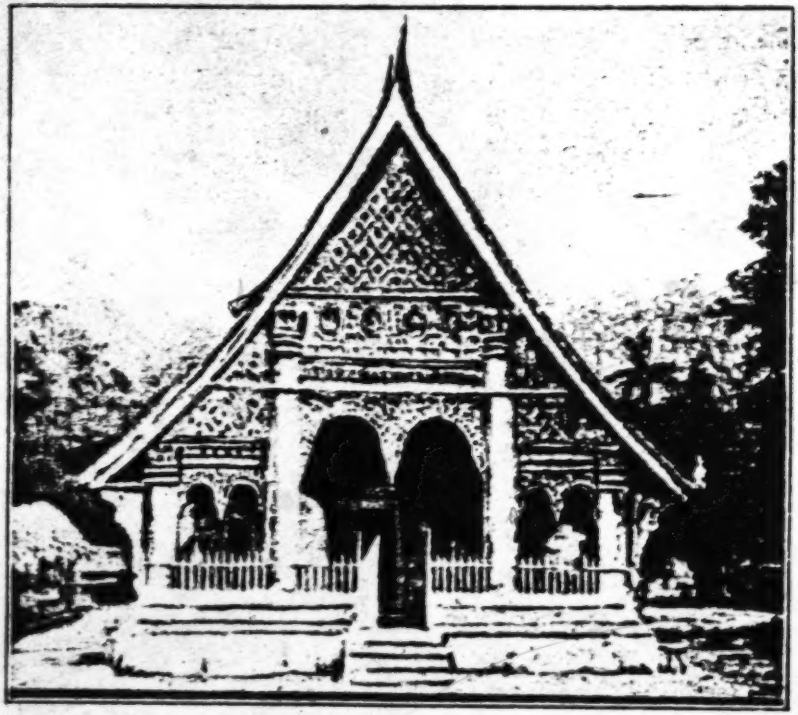


Fig. 38 /p. 146/ Pagoda in Luang-Prabang.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--110a ©-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

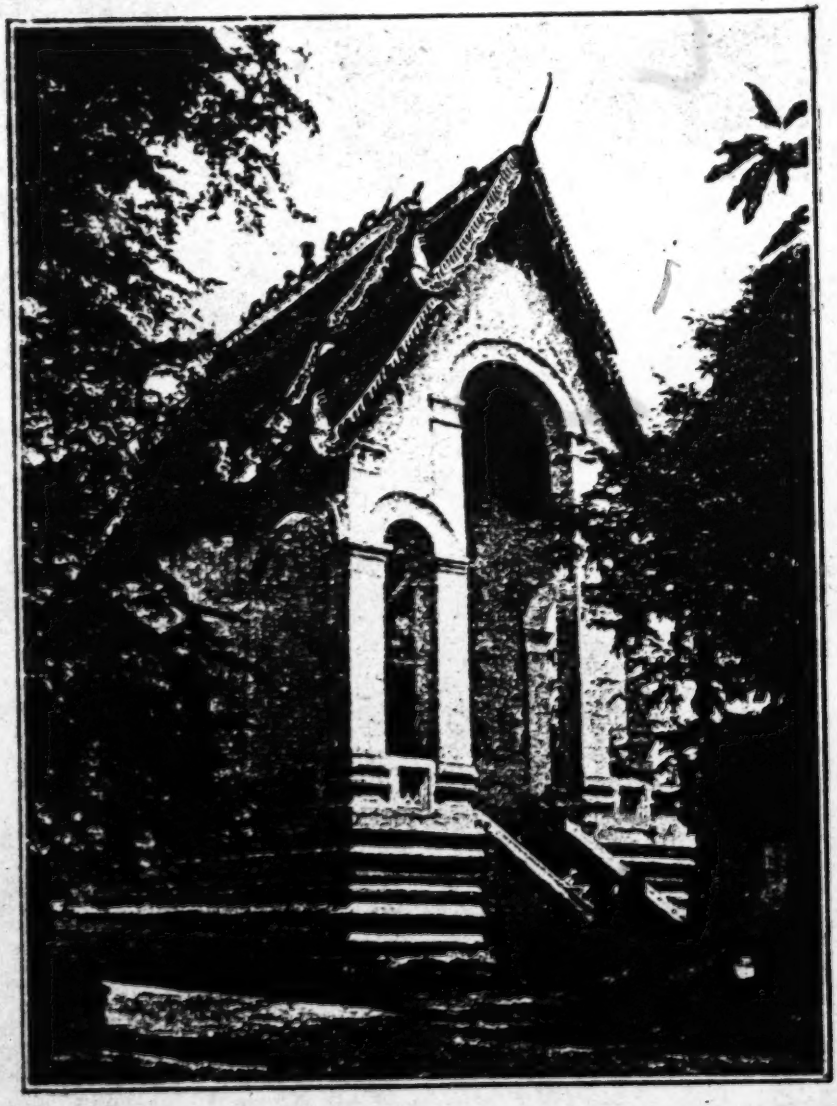


Fig. 39 /p.148/ Doorway of a pagoda in Don-Sang-Phai.
(Khong Archipelago.)

149: Reinach--114a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

Fig. 40 /p.152/ Pagoda in Khong.

149: Reinach--116a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

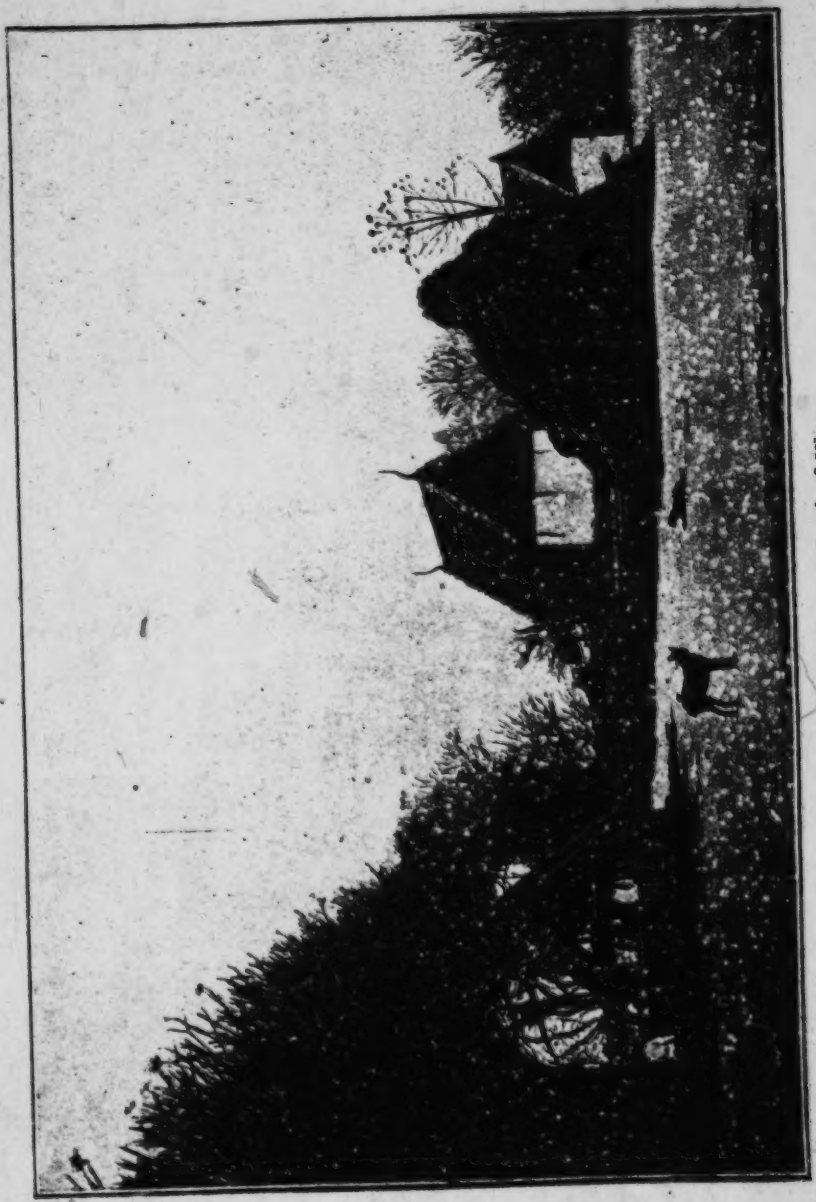


Fig. 41 /p.155/ Pagoda of the Rocks. --Island of Khong.

149: Reinach--124a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 43 /p. 165/ A ceremony in the Wat-Si-Saket Pagoda in Vien-Tiane.

304 produced with an implement bearing several fine points which are dipped in India ink or diluted cinnabar. Depending on the coloring matter used, the tattoos are dark blue or brick red in color. The tattoo artists give their taste and fancy free rein and produce the most varied designs which, for example, represent intertwined snakes, dragons, lions, tigers and imaginary animals. Oftentimes there is only one overall color which makes the tattooed person look like a man wearing a close-fitting blue bathing suit.

304 885 The practice of tattooing is a very old one and its origin is lost in [186] dark antiquity. It is at once a kind of coquetry and a proof of courage because of the suffering which the operation causes and the dangers it involves in a land where antisepsis is unknown to the natives and where the tools used are as dirty as the operators. [Illustration here]

In some localities a man who is not tattooed is regarded as lacking in virility, and as a sign of his inferiority he may not bathe upstream from women.

562 304 Laotian women are not tattooed. This custom is practiced only by the Youn and Kha women, where tattoos are usually limited to lines, stars or reptiles on the hands, imitations of rings on the fingers, etc.

301 [187] Personal adornment. In all seasons both men and women wear flowers on their ears or in a string around their coil of hair. This gracious custom, which flatters both the eye and the sense of smell, must be extremely ancient in origin. It is to be found in many parts of the globe which have no relation to Laos, and particularly in Polynesia. [Illustration here]

• 346 531 Pagodas. Laotian pagodas are as numerous as they are varied in respect to type of construction, architecture, dimensions and ornamentation. In sparsely populated villages and poor muongs the pagodas are built like the houses, either of wood, thatch or bamboo lattice, although with greater care and a few slight additional decorations. Elsewhere, in the larger centers, the pagodas are built of brick, roofed with tile, enhanced by many-colored and gilded ornaments of carved wood and embellished with pseudo-sculptured motifs made of staff. On the inside, the walls are covered with brightly colored frescoes [188] which often picture, against a gold background, religious or warlike scenes taken from the Ramayâna and other more realistic ones which often border on obscenity.

346 Pagodas are always built on ground which has been perfectly leveled, is quite extensive and is surrounded by a wooden palisade or brick wall of elbow height.

[485] Within the pagoda enclosures there are bonzeries and dependent structures to serve as quarters for the bonzes, schools for their pupils and hostelries for travelers.

735 The construction and upkeep of pagodas are entirely dependent on the generous liberality of the faithful. Thus these edifices can be used 346 as a criterion for discovering both the state of prosperity of a region and the religious faith of its inhabitants.

[778] As used to be the case for our churches, Laotian pagodas and even their enclosures are, according to the customs of the land, sanctuaries which confer immunity against legal prosecution for certain crimes and misdemeanors.

[527] It is also in the enclosure and sometimes under the cloisters and verandas of the pagodas that the inhabitants gather on the legal holidays, and also private holidays, which are known as "Ngans".

844 Childbirth. Dr. Estrade describes the delivery of a woman of southern Laos as follows. The preliminaries, the operation itself and post-delivery procedure are the same, with only slight differences in detail, in northern Laos, and we may therefore quote Dr. Estrade's description as applicable to all of Laos in general.

"Childbirth never takes place in the house inhabited by the pregnant woman or her direct relatives, but always in the home of a neighbor or distant relative who gives hospitality to the patient until she is up and about again. The duration of pregnancy is counted in moons, as in all calculations of time, the moon being the essential element for the Laotian in the measurement of time and the occurrence 777 of a great many phenomena. When a woman reaches the last moon of her pregnancy she takes certain precautions all tending to delay 821 delivery until the first phase of the new moon, since births during the last phases are signs of misfortune [189] such as the death of the child, [782] deformity, etc. These prejudices have such force that parents are careless in caring for any child born during the last phases of the moon, and in such a case all of their effort goes into prayers, offerings to the bonzes and the making of votive offerings (1)

(1) This assertion should not, however, be taken too literally or in any general sense. This is a prejudice which is kept up by the bonzes in their own self-interest, and is easy to see through. (Author's note.)

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Fig. 76 /p. 282/ Catholic mission in Bassac.

149: Reinach--270a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 93 /p. 368/ A that.

149: Reinach--387a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

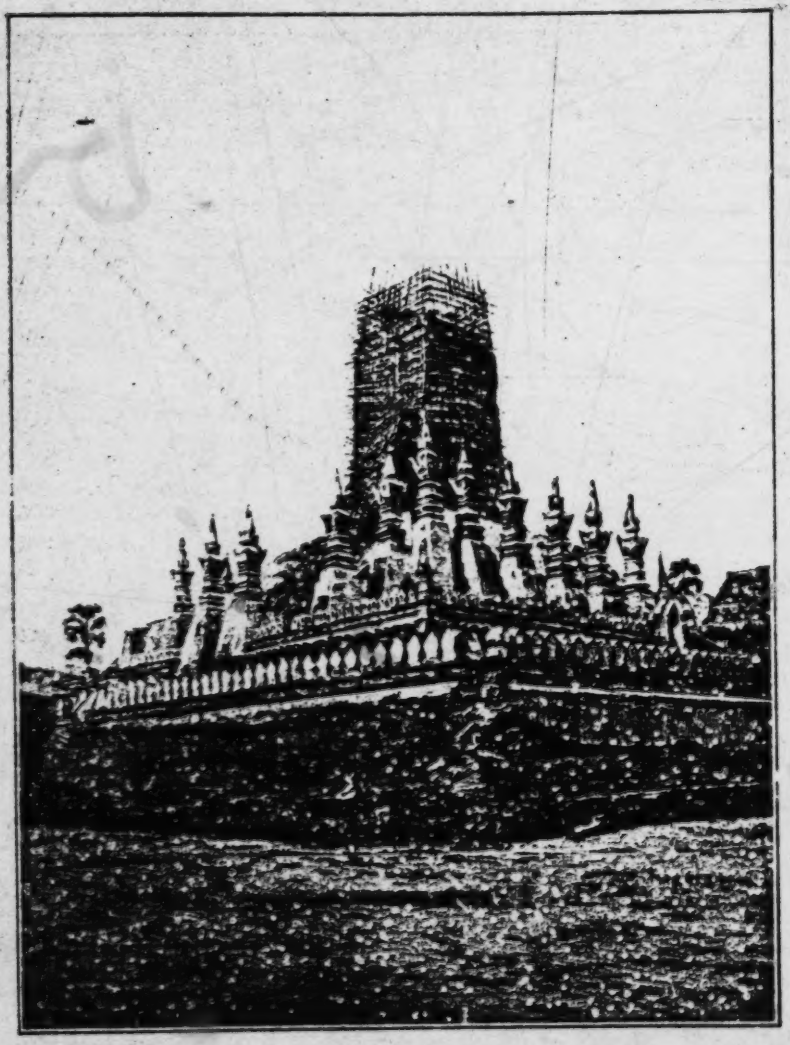

Fig. 122 /p. 513/ The That-Louang in Vien-Tiane.

175 the fourteenth century. Archaeological discoveries made in recent
177 years in the region of Luang Prabang and more recent ones in the
779 neighborhood of Vientiane may enable this important event in the religious history of Laos to be moved back more than two centuries.

[23] The Pagoda.

346 "Laotians liked to place their pagodas on high points, but their
778 marked taste for the edge of the water made them prefer the neighborhood of rivers. This location of pagodas is a natural consequence of
[792] the relations between bonzes and inhabitants. The former drew their livelihood from the latter, and these are crowded on the river banks."
In principle the pagoda consists of three elements:

346 1) The buildings connected directly with the cult: vat, chapels, libraries; that, standing landmarks and niches;

2) The surrounding enclosures, exterior and interior;

3) The buildings for the immediate use of the inhabitants of the pagoda: monastery [bonzerie], cells for the bonzes, reception halls.

The vat consists of a large hall furnished with a pedestal on which stands the statue of the Buddha often accompanied by a preaching pulpit. The columns and walls are frequently ornamented with paintings.

Among the annexes of the vat, the most numerous are the chapels which are in the form either of delicate buildings or small compound halls.

The that is a votive and sometimes a funereal monument. (See appendix on Vientiane).

The only piece of furniture always found in the vat is the preaching pulpit, an elegant construction, often made of gilded wood. By way of furniture there are a few seats for the chiefs of the bonzes,
[788] particularly for the torch bearer. Finally, particularly in the region of Luang Prabang, one finds the hang-lin, a curious spout-shaped object, with elegant decoration, which is used for sprinkling the Buddhas on great feast days (cf. the New Year). These various finely carved objects are usually made of gilded wood and are sometimes inlaid with enamelled lead [24] whose brilliant gleam makes them sparkle. The manuscript chests are usually collected in the
[217] libraries, piled up in the shape of an inverted pyramid; they are generally carved and gilded.

796 disciples: "It is not proper that I should enter Nirvana without having conversed with those who have taken care of me, without having spoken to the community of disciples." After he had spoken to them, he received a visit from Mara, the Buddhist demon, to whom he said: "Do not worry, oh Malin, [perhaps= oh wily one--Translator] in a short time it will be the Nirvana of the Perfect one, in three months I will enter into Nirvana."

It is the memory of this reunion of disciples which the Laotians celebrate during the feast. This ceremony is the classic boun with alms to the bonzes, candles, small stick of incense, etc.

Boun Pha vet.

796 346 This boun may take place from the third Laotian month on. Once a year, each pagoda in turn organizes a great feast. The day before, the pagoda is filled with bonzes who have come from very far away to hear the reading of this edifying story, while the young people arrive during the night to pay court to the young girls. By six o'clock of the next morning, the reading begins and only ends at nightfall. At half past seven the offering of food is made to the bonzes, then the recitation of an act of grace. After which the venerables continue the reading of the Phat Vet until the evening, taking turns at regular intervals. In the courtyard of the pagoda, a pedestal has been erected especially for the ceremony. In the center of this rises a preaching pulpit made of a banana trunk which is carved all over and surrounded by draperies on three sides in order to [35] mask the public from the bonz At the base of the four pillars supporting the pulpit, four urns of perfumed water are placed, covered with a banana leaf, and between them in the center there is a bag of paddy and a basket of salt. Along the walls of this temporary hall is displayed the history of Pha Vet painted on cloth. Each reader receives a basket in which the offerings are fancily arranged. At the end of the reading of each chapter all the listeners throw a handful of grilled rice afar. Outside at the four cardinal points small altars are erected with offerings of rice. To the east, in a secluded spot, stands a larger altar which is covered and in which are placed a miniature mat and mattress, some pillows, small sticks of incense, candles, rice pellets, flowers, a tea pot and a bowl for alms. This altar is for the reception of Pra Upagutta who will protect the feast from the malignant influences of Mara (Cf. B.E.F.E.O. 1904: Mara and Upagutta).

This story is often represented in the pagoda paintings, particularly in the Vat May at Luang Prabang.

173: Deydier --66 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1946) Laotians AM8

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[148]

Fig. IX. Vientiane. Library of the Vat Siaket (Cl. Service Français d'Information [French Information Service]).

173: Deydier--67 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Fig. X. Vientiane. The Vat Phra Keo (Cl. Roz). [150]

173: Deydier--69 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AMI Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

Fig. XII. Vientiane. The That Luang seen from the west. (Cl. Presse Information).

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173a Deydier --70 H. B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Fig. XIII. Luang Prabang. Vat Visun. Door wing of the northern facade. (Cl. E.F.E.O.)

173: Deydier--71 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

[154]

Fig. XIV. Luang Prabang. Vat Pakhe, Door-wing of the Dutch (Cl. Presse Information).

173: Deydier--72 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Fig. XV. Luang Prabang. Vat Phra Huak. Principal eastern facade. (Cl. E.F.E.O.)

173: Deydier --73 H, B-3 (no date) 1952 AM1 Indochina
(ca. 1940) Laotians AM8

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Fig. XVI. Luang Prabang. The That Luang. (Cl. E.F.E.O.)